

Online Program FAQs

How is the online program curriculum different from the in-person MSW program?

The curriculum across all of our MSW programs is the same. The same content that students receive in our Online Program is delivered in our in-person program. The only difference is delivery method.

There are lots of online MSW programs. What makes USC's different?

With our Online program you will experience our quality curriculum delivered online through a variety of interactive modules. Our program provides the best of an asynchronous program—where you have the flexibility to complete your work when you can—with the rich interaction that is only possible through synchronous sessions with peers and instructors. Weekly modules for a given course will include different combinations of readings, videos, recorded lectures, class discussions and assignments. Across the courses you take, the high-quality presentation of content is delivered with enough variety to keep you engaged, but with an easy-to-access interface that will feel intuitive and consistent.

Are courses synchronous or asynchronous?

Courses in the Online MSW program are all delivered virtually. Most sessions are asynchronous, meaning students can complete the material for a given module at any time during the week. However, some courses include synchronous sessions which are scheduled. These are fixed meetings with instructors and peers when the class logs in at the same time—often for an important discussion or to work on a practice skill related to the course content. There will be synchronous sessions most weeks, generally in the evenings.

How will I meet other students in the Online Program?

Students in the online program will have the opportunity to interact with and get to know peers who are in their classes. True, making these connections in a fully online environment is not the same as it is when you are face-to-face. But the periodic synchronous sessions scattered throughout your program of study provide opportunities to interact with your peers in real time. You'll also complete group-based projects in some of your classes which will involve extensive collaboration with peers and have the chance to take advantage of synchronous office hours with your instructors.

Can I work while enrolled in the program?

Yes, it's possible for you to have a part-time job during the semester, but this is a full-time program. It will not be feasible to work a full-time job while in the program.

Is there a part-time version of the Online MSW program?

Not yet! But we plan to launch the online version of our part-time program (we call it “extended time”) soon.

Can you give me a sense of how many hours per week I'll spend doing course work and my field placement?

Your plan of study generally involves five online courses each semester. In a given week, you'll go to your in-person field practicum for two full days and complete modules for each of your classes. A class module will usually include a mix of activities such as readings, pre-recorded lectures, activities, quizzes, etc. We estimate that each module will require 6 – 8 hours to complete, so across the five courses you should expect to spend 30 – 40 hours each week on course-related activities.

Is the program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE)?

Yes, this is a CSWE-accredited program.

How long does it take to finish the program?

The full-time Online MSW Program is structured to be completed in two years (four consecutive semesters).

What technology or software will I need?

You will need a computer and internet access to complete the Online MSW Program.

What kind of technical support is available if I encounter issues?

We have created your online learning experience on Blackboard, a Learning Management System (LMS). You'll use Blackboard to access online course materials, submit assignments and tests, and interact with other students and instructors. USC provides [24/7 Blackboard support](#) and a robust [knowledge base](#) where you can find answers to virtually any Blackboard-related question you have.

What other support and advising will I receive in the Online Program?

You will be provided with access to the same academic and career advising resources as our on-campus students.

I see there are certificate programs in military social work, drug and addiction studies, and trauma. Are these available to students in the Online Program?

Yes! We encourage you to consider getting a certificate while working towards your MSW. You can learn more about these certificates and how to contact the Certificate Coordinators [here](#).

I want to be a therapist...or maybe a community organizer. I'm just not sure. Do I have to choose when I apply?

No, you don't have to choose. Our advanced generalist program is designed so you acquire skills across all client systems: individuals, groups, communities and organizations. Policy is something that impacts all of these systems, so it is woven throughout the curriculum.

While we don't have specializations, per se, our unique [certificate programs](#) provide students with opportunities to gain expertise in the fields of military social work, drug and addiction studies and trauma-informed practice.

What kinds of jobs can I get with an MSW?

Regardless whether you graduate from our Online Program or one of our in-person programs, the MSW opens up many career possibilities. Some of our graduates get jobs as clinical social workers in the fields of mental health or substance abuse. Others work as healthcare social workers in hospitals or school social workers in educational settings, in hospice or youth development, as a refugee employment specialist or a nonprofit administrator. Your MSW is highly versatile!

How much does the program cost?

[Tuition for the on-line program](#) for in-state residents is \$7,867 per semester. This same cost for in-state students in our in-person program.

Is USC's online MSW more expensive than other online MSW programs?

For in-state residents, the cost of our Online MSW program is one of the most competitive in the country.

Are there any scholarships for students in the Online Program?

All students in the online program have the same access to all the [scholarships and financial aid](#) available to students in our in-person programs.

Courses are online but field placement is in-person. How will that work?

All students who start the Online Program in Fall 2025 will be South Carolina residents. They will be given a field practicum at an organization geographically near where they live so they can attend in person.

Are there any field placement options that are virtual?

No. We do not currently offer virtual field placements.

Do I get paid for my field placement?

No. You do not get paid for your field placement.

Do I get to choose my placement?

Students in the first year of the program are assigned a field placement. Our [Field Office](#) has partnerships with over 400 organizations, and our program is designed to integrate your classroom learning with your hands-on experience at your practicum site.

Further questions?

Please email one of our enrollment specialists at coswrcrt@mailbox.sc.edu.